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Concern at rise in people taking potentially fatal nitrous oxide



Police with a used nitrous oxide "laughing gas" canister found in the Banbury area

WARNING OVER LAUGHING GAS

A SPATE of young people taking the legal high "laughing gas" has prompted police and politicians to issue a warning on its dangers.

Thames Valley Police has warned how nitrous oxide, used by dentists for years as a sedative, can have fatal side-effects.

The force said it had seen an increase in teenagers and young adults taking the gas, which is also known as "hippy crack", in Banbury.

TVP's warning comes after an 18-year-old man from South East London died in hospital last month after drinking alcohol and ingesting the gas.

Although the drug, which induces short-lived euphoria and mild hallucinations, is most popular with teenagers, police said adults were increasingly participating.

It said over the past few weeks many used canisters have been found in lay-bys near to Daeda's Woods and Bodicote Mill.

Police Sergeant Becky Fishwick said: "We have seen an increased use of nitrous oxide gas (N2O) by teenagers and young adults."

"We are increasing awareness to educate any young people thinking of using N2O of what the potential life-changing and fatal effects can be and also to advise parents of the signs to look for in young people that are using the gas."

Callum Keown
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Prolonged use of nitrous oxide causes significant loss of vitamin B12, causing brain and nerve damage, she said.

It has been associated with anaemia, tinnitus, numbness in extremities and even death.

Oxygen deprivation can also lead to loss of consciousness which could potentially lead to choking, asphyxiation and death.

MP for North Oxfordshire Victoria Prentis said the risks were "alarming" and urged the public to report anyone selling the gas to the police.

She said: "I am glad Thames Valley Police has taken steps to make sure the public are aware of the dangers of nitrous oxide."

"The potential health risks associated with nitrous oxide inhalation are quite alarming and could be life threatening."

"I would also echo the comments from the police asking the public to report any sale of the substance, which is illegal."

Last week Lambeth Council banned the use and sale of the legal high, imposing a maximum £1,000 fine on those who do.

The council's cabinet approved a "Public Spaces Protection Order" that bans the "consumption and supply of legal highs in public spaces".

Lambeth's cabinet argued that an imminent Government ban on nitrous oxide would tackle supply but felt it needed to go further to stop teenagers using the gas.

Cherwell District Council did not respond to whether they would be looking at introducing a similar ban.

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Homework club's efforts praised



Picking up the award

A HOMEWORK club supporting youngsters across the county has been hailed a success.

The club was set up at The Hill Community Centre in Banbury in March to provide young people with a place to study.

It also offers youngsters access to laptops, free internet, a hot meal and support from a team of staff and volunteers at its base.

About 15 children, between the ages of 10 and 16, have attended sessions at the Bretch Hill centre.

The club was funded by Sanctuary Housing

Community Investment Fund, which supports projects benefitting its residents and their communities.

Sheena Gow, of The Hill Community Centre, said:

"We are grateful for the support from Sanctuary Housing in establishing the homework club."

The club launched earlier this year after requests from youngsters wanting somewhere safe and quiet to study, along with the resources they needed.

Sanctuary Housing's neighbourhood partnerships manager Kate Winstanley said: "We are so pleased to continue our partnership with The Hill Community

Centre, to help them develop and manage community-led projects.

"The young people had a need for this group and it's great to hear that it was set up successfully and well attended."

The Hill Community Centre scooped the partnership trophy at Sanctuary Housing's Cherwell Community Awards.

It was awarded for its efforts to work with residents, groups and organisations in the area.

Development plan for units

Council to decide on the planning proposals for three spaces at Wildmere Park with hopes to attract industry and employment

Hannah Somerville
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THREE new industrial units could be coming to Wildmere Park, north east Banbury if given the go-ahead this afternoon.

Planning permission is being sought by Apperley Estates Ltd to develop Units 6, 7 and 8 of the park for business, general industry and storage or distribution.

Overall the three buildings cover 1,782 sq m of space currently being used as an informal Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) parking area.

Cherwell District Council's Planning Committee will meet today from 3pm to discuss the application.

So far no exact plans have been given as to what the units could be used for, and no indication of the cost or time

length of the development.

John Hallam, founder of Chipping Norton-based firm John Hallan Associates, who are the agents for the application, said: "There are units on one side of the industrial development and this application will complete the other side. We have no idea what the end use will be. But any new unit will encourage employment in the area and bring more industry to Banbury."

This application is among the first on an unusually long planning agenda for Cherwell District Council. There are 24 items on the agenda, 16 of which are applications on which a decision is due to be reached.

Chairman Colin Clarke said on Monday that the committee would meet early due to the "sheer number" of items on the list, adding: "We have got a meeting this afternoon to confirm, but it should be a 3pm start."

Tick project to keep pets healthy

DOG owners in Banbury are urged to get their pets to a vet to keep the risk of tick bites low.

Local practices, including Hawthorne Lodge Veterinary Surgery in Bar Street, have joined a new initiative aiming to keep the UK's dogs free from blood-sucking ticks.

The Big Tick Project tracks the rise of the tick population in the UK to discover how many of them are carrying diseases.

Vets taking part in the project will collect ticks and send them to Bristol University laboratories for research in tick-based disease.

The campaign has recently been endorsed by naturalist and TV star Chris Packham, best known for his role in the BBC's nature series Springwatch.

He said: "Research highlighted by the Big Tick Project experts at Bristol University suggests that ticks are a growing problem especially in areas such as urban parkland, woodland or open country."

"While I find both ticks and fleas interesting creatures, I don't want them on my dogs, in my house, or on me. I want the best advice and treatment available and I know I can get this by talking to my vet."

By taking part in the project, veterinary services in Banbury will offer dog owners a tick check and information on tick control.

To take part or find out more visit bigtickproject.co.uk or call Hawthorne Lodge Vet Centre on 01295 259446.

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Hopeful chefs to battle it out in cookery contest



Participants in earlier rounds of Visit Banbury's Create a Banbury Dish competition, which will culminate in a live cook-off this Sunday

Hannah Somerville
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ASPIRING chefs in Banbury will battle it out to become flavour of the month at a live cooking event this weekend.

The Create a Banbury Dish competition, set up by organisation Visit Banbury, invites local people to invent a dish to reflect the character and heritage of the town.

A cook-off this Sunday will see three finalists put the finishing touches to their creations in front of a 50-strong audience at the Little Amsterdam Cafe, Bar Street.

The contest opened in May this year, with entries flooding in from all over town.

Visit Banbury founder Tim Tarby-Donald said: "It has been going really well. One of our main goals when we started Visit Banbury was to try to bring together different groups. We have got a lot of people involved."

"Of the entries, we had a Polish student who came up with a variation on Polish dumplings, and quite a bit of game. Someone came up with the idea of trying to recreate

The three finalists are taking part in the initiative organised by Visit Banbury to create a dish that represents the town's character and its heritage

the Banbury cheese. Most of them used local produce like Wykham Park Farm beef or Hooky ale."

On the menu on Sunday is a lamb shank, a pork dish and pigeon salad. Competitors include a freelance chef, Phil Seal, and two Banbury and Bicester College students.

Mr Seal, 26, said: "I have been cooking for three years and every day is a nervous day."

"My dish involves pan-seared pigeon breasts, reduced with Madeira and red wine with a 'jus au mushroom'."

"In medieval times people lived and worked off the land and ate a lot of game. It was easy to get hold of. I wanted to turn the starter into a proper dish."

When the food is ready, a

panel of 15 diners will sample and judge the dishes.

All three finalists will then present Banbury town mayor Tony Mephram with framed copies of the menu at the Town Hall and one will receive a special prize.

Mr Tarby-Donald added: "We have an amazing prize lined up. It's very special and related to Banbury."

Little Amsterdam manager Tjebbe Andrews said: "We are expecting to be completely full on Sunday."

"We have had lots of people saying how excited they are, and we can't wait. It will be a really good chance for people to see what good chefs we have in Banbury; the college is exceptional and the restaurants are exceptional. It will also be really good for us to let people know we are here."



Police hunt man who 'stole meat at Co-op'

BANBURY: A man stole a selection of meats from a Co-op store.

Thames Valley Police has released CCTV images, above, of a man it wants to speak to in connection with the incident, which occurred last Tuesday.

A man entered the Middleton Road store and put packets of meat in a carrier bag. After his payment was declined, the man left the store with his bag of meat without paying.

RSPCA officer on TV

BANBURY: The exploits of a local RSPCA officer were featured in Episode 11 of Channel 5's The Dog Rescuers.

Lauren Bailey, 27, is called to rescues and to offer owners advice throughout Oxfordshire, but operates mainly in the Banbury area.

In Episode 11, which aired on Tuesday, July 28, Miss Bailey was called to a house where a collie, Bracken, had given birth to eight puppies and was worryingly thin.

Miss Bailey was later forced to ask the police to seize both the mother and her puppies.

For more information visit channel5.com/shows/the-dog-rescuers

Keep children entertained this summer

PARENTS can keep their children entertained throughout the holidays with new activities offered by the council.

Cherwell District Council wants parents to get in touch about a variety of events, trips and summer camps run by sport coaches and members from the recreation and health team.

Included in the activities across Banbury, Kidlington, Bloxham and Bicester are football and cricket camps, holiday hubs and craft and art sessions.

Deputy leader of the council and councillor George Reynolds said the low-cost initiatives were a great way of keeping youngsters entertained.

Mr Reynolds added: "Over the next six weeks parents will be racking their brains for ways to keep the children amused without breaking the bank."

"We have come up with a range of activities to suit different ages, interests and budgets to keep children entertained and parents relaxed."

"Whether it's a week at a sports camp, a visit to the hubs or an action-packed day out we have it all."

"Those wanting to stay closer to home can join in with the coaches as they travel the district hosting free play sessions."

"With so much to choose from parents will no longer have the worry over what to do but which activity to pick."

Parents can find out more information about the activities on offer by calling 01295 221803.

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Cricket is cancelled

BODICOTE: A CRICKET match was abandoned after travellers reportedly refused to leave the pitch.

Bodicote Cricket Club was set to play Byfield in a South Northants Cricket League game on Saturday, July 25, at King's Field in White Post Road.

But according to secretary of Bodicote Cricket Club Steve Barlow, the club cancelled the fixture after travellers entered the pitch and would not leave when asked to.

New childcare shop

BANBURY: A CHILDCARE agency has opened a new branch on South Bar Street. Tinies Oxfordshire will now look for nursery managers, early year practitioners, nursery staff and nannies for people across the county.

The company was launched in 2010 by managing director Nicola Munck, who lives in Bodicote.

She said: "The team are thrilled to open our brand new premises.

"Oxfordshire is a buzzing, family-orientated area where there is a lot of demand for nursery places, nannies, babysitters and crèches for weddings and corporate events."

Kids football classes

BLOXHAM: AN OXFORD United coach is offering football classes for youngsters.

Head coach of the Oxford United Player Development Centre Mark Andrews is hosting the camps for children aged between four and 13.

The sessions, which cost £10 a day, will run until August 28 from Monday to Friday at Jubilee Park beginning at 9.30am and finishing at 3pm.

For information call 07952 579358.

Mum nominates medic for award after top care

Annabal Bagdi
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WHEN her first-born child developed a dangerous facial birthmark threatening her eyesight, mother Lynn Bailey feared for the worst.

But thanks to the care of paediatric consultant Kokila Lakhoo, all her fears "disappeared" and five-year-old daughter Beatrice is now fighting fit.

Mrs Bailey, of Banbury, said the medic's passion for her work needs to be celebrated and nominated Dr Lakhoo for a Hospital Heroes award, run by the Banbury Cake's sister paper the Oxford Mail.



The awards celebrate the extraordinary work of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust's (OUHT) hospital workers

Mrs Bailey said: "My daughter once asked me if Dr Lakhoo had wings because she is so amazing, she must be an angel. I'd certainly agree with that."

"I remember being in such a state, my baby did not look normal. I wasn't coping until this amazing lady walked into the room and all my fears disappeared."

Mrs Bailey said her daughter was born in January 2010, "perfectly fine", but within just a couple of days started to develop a large birthmark on her left cheek.

She said it grew "rather rapidly" and began to "protrude" into Beatrice's left eye, before the blood-filled sac intruded into the whole of her eye socket and started squashing her eye.

Mrs Bailey said Beatrice was about five weeks old when their GP told the family to visit the John Radcliffe Hospital, where they later met Dr Lakhoo.

She said Beatrice then underwent four years of treatment using beta-blocker propranolol to help shrink the size of the birthmark, with the youngster also needing laser surgery last year and further surgery this April to clean her "eye channels".

After weekly appointments with Dr Lakhoo and at the Oxford Eye Hospital, Beatrice now only needs annual check-ups.

Mrs Bailey said Dr Lakhoo went above and beyond the call of duty to guide her through the treatment, which at times seemed never-ending.

She said the medic was always at the end of the telephone to put all her worries to rest as a first-time mother, even answering e-mails with any other con-

cerns.

Mrs Bailey added: "She was amazing. I just feel from the moment we met her, she was in control and she knew what she was doing. She was nurturing."

"It was a really hard time. People would stop us in the street and say 'What is that on your baby's face?'. You don't feel strong enough to deal with it all the time."

"I will never forget her kind words at each consultation knowing my goal was to have a child society viewed as normal, she just helped in a way no one else did."

Mrs Bailey said it was important for medics working within the county's hospitals to be recognised for their care.

She added: "I think people are very quick to complain when something goes wrong but we should be more forthcoming when something goes right."



Lynn Bailey and her five-year-old daughter Beatrice, who have nominated Kokila Lakhoo, top left

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Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and James is finding that his approach is a major factor

in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for,

which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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Wheels for all at bike event

AN INCLUSIVE bike and tricycle centre could be on the way to Banbury after a cycling open day was held for people with disabilities and special needs.

The 'Wheels For All' day, held at the North Oxfordshire Academy, Drayton Road, gave people the chance to find out more about inclusive ways to enjoy cycling.

About 40 people, aged from five up to 50, came along to the open day last month. It was hosted by national charity Cycling Projects and Cherwell District Council.

Councillor George Reynolds, deputy leader for Cherwell, said: "This was an incredibly rewarding event which our officers were proud to support."

"The event gave people with disabilities as well as their friends, family and carers the opportunity to see for themselves just how the bikes and trikes work and try them out on the athletics track."

"For some of those who came along it was their first ever cycling experience and it was great to see how much they enjoyed the opportunity."

"We will engage with Cycling Projects to determine if there is scope for a permanent Wheels for All centre in Banbury."

Ten different styles of specially-adapted bicycles and tricycles were available to suit a range of differing needs, including single- and double-handed cycles, recumbent trikes to be ridden lying flat, and wheelchair transporter cycles.

A decision on whether to introduce a centre in Banbury will be announced in due course.

For more information visit cycling.org.uk

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Firm gives cash for defibrillator

David Rivers
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A LAW firm has donated £450 towards a new defibrillator for Banbury.

Spratt Endicott Solicitors, which announced the Banbury Lions as its charity of the year in June, launched a fundraising scheme for the new device and has so far raised the figure towards the £2,000 device hoped for spring 2016.

A demonstration highlighting the need for defibrillators was held by

the law firm with Banbury Lions and Martin Render from charity Community Heartbeat Trust at the law firm's offices on South Bar Street on July 21.

Marketing manager at Spratt Endicott, Jane Ward said the demonstration was a pleasure to attend and was excited about the figure raised so far in the campaign.

She added: "We would like to thank Martin and the Banbury Lions for giving this demonstration."

"We are thrilled to be supporting such a worthwhile campaign and look forward to continuing with our fundraising efforts."

President of Banbury Lions Ian Wilson said he was impressed with Spratt Endicott for reaching out to them in the attempt to buy a second defibrillator.

"We are delighted to have the backing of such a well respected company."

"It is a project that goes to the heart of what we do."

Mr Wilson added that he expects a separate defibrillator be installed in the town centre over the coming weeks and hoped it could be placed outside Marks & Spencer.

Chairman and co-founder

of defibrillator charity Community Heartbeat Trust Mr Render praised the law firm for the initiative.

Mr Render said: "Thank you for raising this money."

"People like yourselves who care

about saving lives, thanks for getting involved."

More information on the Banbury Lions and the defibrillator appeal can be found at banburylions.co.uk.



From left, Rita Kimberger and Ian Wilson of Banbury Lions Club, Jane Ward of Spratt Endicott and Martin Render with a defibrillator

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Ancient artefact is found

Knife thought to be 3,000 years old was found and identified

Alex Regan
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AN AMATEUR metal detectorist struck brass after discovering a 3,000-year-old artefact on the Isle of Wight.

Christopher Preece, of Banbury, stumbled across the knife – thought to be a leather cutting tool that dates back to between 1000BC and 800BC – while holidaying at his sister's house on the island in June.

Now the brass object has been identified and is on show at the Isle of Wight's Roman Villa Museum.

He said: "It's a metal detectorist's dream to make this sort of discovery."

"I always take my equipment to pass the time."

"I was on the coast of Sandown, and the cliffs are slowly crumbling into the sea, so I like to try to find things before they're lost forever."

After finding the knife, along with a button dating back to the 17th Century, the former car panel beat-

er gave the pieces to the museum.

He added: "They were so excited by it, that's really the reward."

"As I was scanning I heard the metal detector go off, I lifted a rock and there it was."

"What excites me is the thought that I'm the first person to handle this for 3,000 years."

The Green Lane resident also uses his metal detector in Oxfordshire, where he has discovered Roman coins.

He said: "I haven't made any discoveries here that could match this."

"The Romans were all over the place so those sort of finds are quite common."

After working on car bodies for more than 30 years, Mr Preece has recently tried his hand at brass and copper artistry.

Using the metal, he creates large coins with faces of monarchs, inspired by Roman coins.

Some of his work has recently been exhibited in galleries in London.

Mr Preece added: "I think sometimes metal detector enthusiasts get a bad name [for keeping items discovered]."

"But I think I'm an ambassador for the hobby."

"It wasn't a tough deci-



sion to make in the slightest, the joy on the faces of the people in the museum is the real reward."

The Isle of Wight is thought to have Bronze Age settlements dating back as far as 1500BC.

Christopher Preece and his wife June; the objects he found



Money transfer

N OXON: There is still close to £1.5m to be transferred back to Cherwell District Council following the Icelandic banking collapse in 2008.

The council was among the county's six local authorities that had a total of £28.5m invested in numerous banks.

It had £6.5m invested with Glitnir, out of which £5.7m has been returned to the council, leaving £0.8m still held in Iceland with interest taking it to £1.468m.

The figures were given in a report presented to councillors of the budget planning committee on Monday, July 20.

The report also showed the average funds available for investment was £48,970m with an interest of £400k.

Sunlight blaze

SIBFORD GOWER: Sunlight shining through the window of a house sparked a blaze.

A passer-by raised the alarm at around 4.15pm on Friday, July 31 and firefighters rushed to the village to find smoke billowing from the home.

Fire crews from Banbury and Chipping Norton used breathing apparatus to enter the house and a thermal imaging camera to find the source of the blaze on the first floor.

Specialist fire investigators found the blaze was sparked by the sunlight shining directly onto flammable materials.

Incident Commander Simon Piper from Banbury Fire Station said: "People should be reminded of the fire hazard of flammable materials left in direct sunlight."



Lifecarers is about providing dependable, one-to-one support to people over the age of 18 in their own homes. Your trained Lifecarer visits to help with personal care and practical things like housework, dressing or shopping. Your Lifecarer offers companionship too, someone to talk with or escort you on a trip out whether that is to go shopping or go out to a coffee shop. A trusted person who keeps an eye on your safety and helps you stay in touch with your family and friends.



A Holistic Approach

Lifecarers believe in a more holistic approach than many other companies. We understand the importance of stimulating body and mind within the daily routine. A gentle stroll to the shops gets you out and builds stamina. Sharing memories gives your mind a work out. All these things can help you enjoy a greater sense of wellbeing.

Meeting you

Lifecarers start by meeting you to see which types of support will be most beneficial. We listen closely to what you would like to achieve from your visit including your interests, and work with you to create a plan that is individually tailored only for you. Your Lifecarer can visit as often and for as long as you choose.

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All Lifecarers are chosen for their caring nature and discretion. They are trained in manual handling, food hygiene dementia, first aid, health and safety and many more. All Lifecarers have reference and background checks, together with a Full Enhanced DBS check. Your Lifecarer can provide all services that can enhance your independence.

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- Contact with family
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- Doctors and appointments
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- Shopping trips And more...

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Family peace of Mind

It can be a constant worry for family and friends too, who may find it difficult to provide the extra support that's needed for family, friends or even neighbours. Lifecarers can help with that support, which is why we have a dedicated team to help you with any questions around what we can do to help you or others.

We are currently looking to recruit Full and Part Time Lifecarers to work in the geographical areas of: Banbury which include Tadmorton, Chacombe, Bloxham, Aynho and surrounding areas and Bicester which include Upper and Lower Heyford, Caversfield, Fritwell and surrounding areas

Contact Marta Wutke (Branch Manager) to discuss specific care needs, Bloxham Mill Business Centre, Barford Road, Bloxham, Oxon, OX15 4FF | 01295 722868

Find out more, or follow us on:

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Lifecarers bright yellow group



@life_carers

Lions organise charity horse ride for everyone

Annual event takes place in grounds of a stately home and covers 10 miles

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

SEASONED and amateur riders are invited to a charity canter in the grounds of Broughton Castle.

The annual "Ride with the Lions" event, now in its 37th year, is organised by the Banbury Lions and has raised thousands of pounds for worthy causes.

This year's event will open at 9am on Sunday, August 16, with the first riders away at 10am and the last at 1pm.

President Ian Wilson said: "People who have done Ride with the Lions before really like it. We get a lot of positive feedback; riders all come along and have a good time. Some take on big equestrian jumps, and some just ride around."

"Broughton Castle's Lord Saye and Sele allows us to use his land free of charge, and local farmers give up their land as well."

Those taking part will cover 10 miles of picturesque countryside, starting and ending in the grounds of the castle. Tickets also include

free entry to the Swalcliffe Park Equestrian Centre and its various cross-country jumps and water complexes. A shorter ride is also available.

This year's event will raise money for the Oxhill-based Redwings equine and veterinary centre and Stratford-upon-Avon Riding for the Disabled (RDA). Formerly based in Banbury, this local branch of the national RDA provides horse and pony-based activities like riding, carriage driving and showjumping to people with disabilities.

Mr Wilson said: "Riding for the Disabled does a fantastic job. They are all volunteers, helping children and adults with both physical and learning disabilities to ride. They have some marvellous positive stories to tell and have had some of their riders competing in the National RDA Championships."

"Redwings have a horse sanctuary at Oxhill, west of Banbury, and do a wonderful job caring for horses and donkeys."

Adult tickets to Ride with the Lions cost £15 in advance or £12 on the day. Children cost £9 in advance or £12 on the day. Family tickets are also available.

Tickets can be purchased at wegotickets.com/banburylions

Call 01295 257907 or email ridewiththelions@gmail.com



The annual Ride with the Lions charity event at Broughton Castle

Recycling plans are defended

PROPOSALS to close recycling centres in the county were defended by Oxfordshire County Council leader Ian Hudspeth after it was suggested they could lead to fly-tipping.

The plans were announced last month and the county council's cabinet supported them going out for consultation from August.

One option on the consultation will be reducing the number of centres in the county – which includes the site in Alkerton.

But council bosses have not said how many of the seven current centres would be likely to close.

The plans have already been criticised for potentially leading to more fly-tipping but Mr Hudspeth said he did not believe this was the case.

The issue was brought up again at the cabinet meeting by Steve Curran, Labour councillor for Leys.

He said: "We should always take into account the principal of extending opening hours to those centres."

"In terms of fly-tipping, if you reduce the number of centres a lot of people are worried that it will bring about an increase in fly-tipping."

"In my experience of fly-tipping in Oxfordshire people arrive at the centre and if it is closed so they just dump their stuff."

County council deputy leader Rodney Rose said that while opening hours would inevitably have to be cut back if money was to be saved he did not feel this would lead to more fly-tipping.

Mr Hudspeth agreed and said: "Oxfordshire has the highest recycling rate of any county in the country."

"If someone has arrived at a closed gate they do not turn to fly-tipping."



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Learn to dance

BANBURY: Residents can try their hand at sequence dancing at a club on Spiceball Park Road.

The Neithrop Sequence Dance Club will be running the sessions every Monday night from 8pm to 10pm at the General Food Sports & Social Club.

Sessions on the last Sunday of every month, instead of Monday, will come with an American Supper from 7.30pm.

Interested dancers can call 01295 264681.

Charity concert

BANBURY: A one-off fundraiser will take place for Helen Hodgkins Trust in October.

A night of musical acts including DJ Mr Switch will commence from 6.30pm at the Mill Arts Centre on October 3.

More details can be found at themillartscentre.co.uk/cms/

VJ Day tea party

BANBURY: People are invited to a tea party celebrating the 70th anniversary of VJ Day at the Town Hall.

Banbury Town Council has organised the event, which will take place from 2pm to 4pm on August 15, with traditional 1940s music provided by Radio Horton.

Banbury Town Mayor and councillor Tony Mephem said: "The tea dance will be a great event. Mayoress Lesley and myself have been polishing up our steps and we're ready to go."

VJ Day celebrates the victory over Japan.

For more information call 01295 250340. Tickets cost £2.50.

Drop-off point for stamp collection is announced

Public invited to contribute to this appeal, which is raising funds for charity

David Rivers
drivers@nqo.com

A NEW drop-off point has been announced in the town for an appeal that gathered more than 100,000 stamps for charity.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church), in Banbury, announced last month it had hit the milestone following a two-year campaign and had begun handing the stamps over to Oxfam and Leukaemia Care.

Project coordinator for the church Des Waddington, based in Crick, near Rugby, said he could see no reason why the campaign could not keep going to raise even more funds for charity.

Now in an attempt to do this a new drop-off point has been set up at fine art shop The Artery, inside Old Town Deli Café in Parsons Street, where the public can drop off their stamps.

Mr Waddington said he was now aiming to mirror the success of the scheme he started in Daventry five years ago which collected half a million stamps.

He added: "It's great that local people will now have a convenient place to donate their unwanted stamps."

"We are excited to expand the project and help good causes."

"Of the 100,000 stamps that have been donated so far, a significant number originated from a local business."

Shop owner Barry Whitehouse said the stamps had an artistic value and was thrilled that some of the public will hand them over instead of throwing them away.

Mr Whitehouse added: "I am really pleased to be the collection point for this appeal."

"It's great that these mini works of art that sit on the corner of envelopes and usually get thrown away are being used in such a way to help the global community."

When stamps are collected by the church, volunteers then begin the process of cutting excess envelope from around the stamps, separating UK and overseas stamps, before counting and placing them in bags of 500.

Church member Andrew Houston added: "It's wonderful that the simple task of collecting stamps can make a big difference to people's lives."

"I look forward to continuing our efforts within the wider Banbury community."



From left, Barry Whitehouse and Des Waddington

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Figures reveal rural crime cost



Anthony Stansfeld

THAMES Valley Police has insisted tackling rural crime is "still a priority" after new figures revealed a rise in the cost to the county.

In July 2013, Anthony Stansfeld, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley pledged police officers would attend every incident of rural crime reported.

But information released by insurance company NFU Mutual revealed rural crime had cost the county £760,000 in the past year, up £650,000 from the previous year.

Speaking on Monday, Mr Stansfeld said: "I will be looking closely at the figures from the NFU to see whether the amount of rural crime has increased or whether it is due to higher value items."

Chief Superintendent Andy Boyd, head of neighbourhood policing and partnerships, insisted specialist crime teams had been resolute in visiting every incident reported.

He said: "In areas that have historically been affected by rural crime we have introduced specialist crime teams."

"These teams have built strong working relationships with the rural crime community."

"This has led to increased reporting, which enables us to thoroughly investigate, increasing the numbers of people arrested and charged, ensuring offenders are brought to justice."

According to Thames Valley Police, the specialist teams have also been running initiatives, including installing tracking systems on agricultural vehicles.

Chief Superintendent Boyd added: "The initiatives are having a real impact across Thames Valley by making it more difficult for those criminals who try to blight our rural communities."

Man pleads guilty to cultivating cannabis

A MAN charged with producing cannabis after two drug factories were found has pleaded guilty to cultivating the plant.

Darren James, 34, of Tithe Court, Banbury, was arrested on June 5 after police raided a property in the street and another in Foundry Street in the town.

On July 14 he was charged with one count of producing cannabis but this was later changed to cultivating cannabis plants, a class-B controlled drug.

On Friday he admitted the charge and was made subject to a community order requiring him to be under curfew from 8pm to 8am for six weeks.

He was also ordered to pay a £60 victim surcharge, £80 costs and a £180 criminal courts charge.

At the time of James' arrest, Sgt David Keith said: "The action undertaken by our local officers shows that where our communities voice their concerns police will listen, respond and where appropriate take action against those who engage in criminality and affect the lives of our communities."

County's Scouts head to Japan for jamboree

Youngsters had to raise £3,000 in order to fund their inclusion in the event and help those from developing nations



The Oxfordshire contingent at the Jamboree; below left, Bear Grylls; below right, flags of the nations involved

Megan Archer
marcher@nqo.com

SCOUTS from across Oxfordshire have embarked on the journey of a lifetime, travelling more than 5,000 miles to celebrate the 23rd World Scout Jamboree in Japan.

After years of planning, preparation and anticipation, 30,000 Scouts from more than 200 countries – with 40 Scouts from Oxfordshire – are now camping altogether, united as one, in a city near Kirara-hama.

Thousands enjoyed an opening ceremony to kick off the jamboree, where all the young people waved their country's flags proudly.

All across Oxfordshire, Scouts have spent 18 months planning and training for the jamboree, which kicked off last Tuesday.

Each Scout had to raise £3,000 to take part in the event, with part of the fee supporting Scouts attending from Bhutan, Botswana and other developing countries.

Scout Emily Marven, 15, from Chipping Norton, said: "The opening ceremony was amazing."

"Seeing all the flags united together made me feel that scouting could change the world."

"It's not every day you can walk from tent to tent and enter a different country to learn about their lives."



Elyse Thomas-Collaire, 14, from Blackbird Leys, added: "It's so exciting to see so many scouts."

"There are tents wherever I look, and it just keeps getting busier."

Throughout the event the Scouts will have the opportunity to take part in activities focused on discovering new cultures, the environment, sustainable development and global issues.

Not just an experience for young people, the county's Scouts have been supported in the run-up to the event by a team of adult volunteers.

Mike Suggate, 25, from Abingdon, is one of the Oxfordshire unit leaders.

He said the jamboree was a brilliant experience for Scouts, but also fun for the adults too.

He said: "I've loved watching them grow in confidence."

"The looks on their faces when they saw the jamboree site for the first time was overwhelming."



Scout leaders from Bicester Thea Desborough and Michelle Cox are currently in Japan and busy meeting people from all over the world.

The two women have also joined the International Service Team (IST) – the driving force behind the jamboree.

Miss Cox said: "I wanted to make new friends and learn about the world whilst supporting the Scouts who are participating."

Later in the week Thea and Michelle will be taking a break from the main event site to take part in a visit to the Peace Park in the centre of Hiroshima.

This part of the programme will see Scouts experience the solemn and reflective atmosphere of Peace Park.

Mark Allen, 14, from Oxford, said: "There are so many amazing things to do here, but I think the Peace project in Hiroshima is really special."

Charlie Hodges, 17, from Long

Hanborough, said he was most excited about getting out on the water while at the jamboree.

He added: "We're making a real impact to the local and international community by getting involved in some great projects."

"But as well as this we're making new friends, and taking part in loads of outdoor activities."

TV personality and chief Scout Bear Grylls said it was great to see thousands of adult Scouts getting involved with the jamboree, as well as young people.

He added: "While lots of people know that scouting is all about adventure, they often don't realise that adult volunteers get to do just as much as our young members."

"The World Scout Jamboree is a great example of this."

"Nearly 4,000 Scouts from across the UK are meeting others from around the world and taking part in some amazing adventures."

"As well as being a fantastic opportunity for young people, the jamboree is a chance for adult volunteers to take part in activities, and learn new skills that they can use in other aspects of their lives."

"Across the UK there are currently 36,000 young people waiting to join the fun, challenge and adventure of scouting, but there are simply not enough adult volunteers to plug the gap."

Visit scouts.org.uk to find out more.

Thousands of people flock to park for beach-themed family fun day

MORE than 4,000 people filled People's Park in Banbury at this year's Play Day Event.

The beach-themed day last month saw the park transformed into a replica seaside giving families a chance to build sand castles, indulge in ice cream and picnics.

Banbury Play Day had organised the event, now in its sixth year,

with help from Cherwell District Council which included a bouldering wall for families to take on.

Cherwell District Council deputy leader and councillor George Reynolds said: "This was the sixth year that we've run Banbury Play Day and as always the aim of the day was to have fun as well as bring together play and youth organisations to show what opportunities are available all year round."

"I want to thank the groups who came along to promote their programmes as well as run free activities for young people."

This year featured a new health zone, teaching youngsters about healthy lifestyle habits including sun safety, healthy teeth and diet.

Mr Reynolds added: "Feedback from the day was very positive with families saying it was great to get information and advice in a relaxed and fun environment."

"But it's not over yet, as a host of other Cherwell-organised activities for young people are taking place over the summer holidays," he added.



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Officers to target crime hotspots says review

Police will have stronger links with Neighbourhood Watch groups across area

Matt Oliver
moliver@nqo.com

BOBBIES will be given more time on the beat and "hotspots" of crime are to be tackled after a landmark policing review.

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood and Police and Crime Commissioner Anthony Stansfeld last week said local policing was a vital part of crime prevention.

But a review carried out by the force has found that neighbourhood officers have been left frustrated by a lack of technical support and time to carry out their duties.

It said local police teams should be protected from having to carry out other duties and be given new technologies introduced to help them stay in touch with residents.

There will be new methods introduced to tackle "hotspots" of crime, so that officers can be sent to patrol where they are most needed, and stronger links forged with Neighbourhood Watch groups.

As part of the changes, some 470 police community support officers (PCSOs) – introduced in 2002 – will be "refocused" away from duties taking them away from community issues.

They had been assigned to scene watches, road closures, detaining suspects, handing out fixed penalty notices and responding to "low-level emergencies", the review claimed.

Mr Habgood said about 370 special constables – volunteer trained police officers – who were carrying out neighbourhood roles would also be "key" to the new approach.

The overhaul comes as the force grapples with how it will save almost £22m by 2017/18, with further budget cuts expected after a government spending review.

Last Thursday Mr Habgood told a police and crime commissioner meeting: "There is a debate about whether neighbourhood policing can be sustained."

"But it is about problem solving. "At the moment we need to rebalance what the public sector takes responsibility for, and neighbourhood policing is core to that."

His comments were backed by Mr Stansfeld, who said: "I regard it as a critical part of policing. This is about modernising it and making it more effective."



Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police Francis Habgood

Children face a new challenge

CHILDREN are being urged to take up a new social media challenge to get them active.

Prizes are up for grabs for children who can 'Beat the Activators' in a Cherwell District Council Facebook fitness challenge.

On the last Friday of each month, a 30-second fitness challenge – the first being star jumps – will be uploaded giving youngsters the chance to beat the council's sport activators David Norridge and Edward Frappe.

Council deputy leader George Reynolds said: "We are always trying to introduce new ways to get children active and this latest initiative will see the activators practice what they preach with a 30-second fitness challenge."

"By uploading the video on to Facebook, parents can show their children what they need to do and help them fill out a record sheet on our website."

"The great thing about this is that the challenge is only 30 seconds long so children of any fitness can take part. However it offers the potential for children to be active for a lot longer as they try and beat their own – and the activators' – score."

The challenges will be for children between eight and 16 and entries of youngsters' best scores will need to be submitted online to be entered into a prize draw.

The target for challenge one is to try to score higher than 40 star jumps in 30 seconds – as set by Mr Norridge.

Video challenges will be uploaded to the facebook.com/cherwelldistrictcouncil. The first was scheduled for last Friday.

Scores can be submitted online at cherwell.gov.uk/youngpeople

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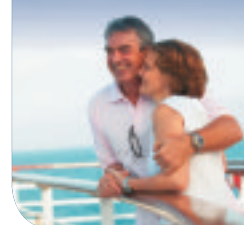
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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

TODAY (WEDNESDAY)

Woodland adventure: An expedition for five- to eight-year-olds to use their detective skills to discover the woodland at The Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, where they will explore, build and play. 10am. £4 suggested donation per child, accompanying adults free. No need to book. 01865 407792.

Bats of the Clumps: Take a peek into the mysterious world of these animals by enjoying a short talk at The Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, by Dave Endacott, of the Oxfordshire Bat Group. It will be followed by a sunset walk around Wittenham Clumps to look for bats in flight. 8pm. Adults £8, children £4. Booking is essential on 01865 407792.

Ship Ahoy: Charlbury's annual holiday club, which has a nautical theme, continues until Friday at St Mary's Church. Suitable for four- to 11-year-olds. 10am-12.30pm. £10 per child, £8 for further siblings. Contact Christine Pearce on 01608 810846 for information.

Leisurely walk: Eight- mile circular walk from The Green, Bletchingham, ref. SP502176, via Weston-on-the-Green and Heathfield. There is a pub stop en route but please bring picnic lunch. 10am. Organised by Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers. The contact is Mary Whitehead 01865 640469.

Drop in and doodle: Free hands-on activities for children at the Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot. Children must be accompanied by an adult. 10am-4pm. Every day until Saturday, August 15. 01235 515144.

Ramblers walk: Leisurely four-mile walk starting near the Fox and Hounds pub, Christmas Common, near Watlington, with pub supper to finish. 6pm. 01865 891147.

Steam day: Enjoy rides in vintage coaches behind Great Western steam locomotives at Didcot Railway Centre, by Didcot Parkway station. There will als be displays of locomotives and carriages, an interactive science centre and a restored air raid shelter. Adults £11, children £9. 01235 817200. Also Saturday and Sunday.

A Tapestry of Artists: First exhibition of the Drovers' Arts Group, a new initiative celebrating and supporting arts and crafts in the Wantage area. It runs at theVale & Downland Museum, Church Street, Wantage, until August 22. There will be a variety of work at the exhibition, which is supported by Green and Co, The Joint Economic Forum and Vale of White Horse District Council. Free entry. The museum is closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays. 01235 771447.

Arts and crafts fair: Exhibition at West Ox Arts Gallery, Town Hall, Market Square, Bampton. Members of West Ox Arts display a variety of handmade gifts, which are for sale, include jewellery, mosaics, ceramics, textiles, paintings and more. Free admission. Until August 23. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday 10.30am-4.30pm and Sunday 2-4pm. 01993 850137.

Star Power: This exhibition at Abingdon County Hall Museum, Market Place, focuses on 50 years of fusion research at Culham. Fusion – the process that powers the stars – could transform the way we produce electricity here on Earth. Until October 18. Free. 01235 523703.

TOMORROW

Witney U3A: There will be a talk on waste management in Oxfordshire at a meeting of the town's branch of the University of the Third Age, at the Methodist Church, High Street, Witney. 2pm. 01993 779168.

SATURDAY

Craft and gift market: Town Hall, Market Place, Henley-on-Thames. A Mynt Image's craft and gift market sells items including leather goods, wooden goods, jewellery, handbags, jams and chutneys, candles, beauty products, cards etc. 10am. Free.

Ramblers walk: 11-mile walk from Westwell to Burford via Great Rissington and the Barringtons, starting at 9.30am. Bring a picnic. Tea in Burford at finish. 01844 339969.

Bicester & Kidlington Ramblers: The group is organising a 4.5-mile circular walk in London with a maritime theme, passing HMS Belfast, the Tower of London, Clink Prison and Southwark Cathedral, meeting at Monument underground station ref TQ329808 at 11am. Optional pub stop at inn in Southwark. Registered assistance dogs only. Contact Mary Gough on 07939 826412 beforehand to arrange cheap train tickets from Bicester North.

Burne-Jones and the Gaskells: Josceline Dimpleby, a descendent of May Gaskell, the last of Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones's intimate women friends, explores their friendship in a talk at the Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford, with Colin Harrison, curator of the Great British Drawings exhibition. 11am. Adults £5, concessions £4. 01865 278 000.

Big Wild Sleepout: Join the RSPB team at Wytham Woods, near Oxford, and enjoy a camping trip like no other. Families are invited to get a unique peek at nature in this stunning research woodland. Activities include spotting badgers and bats, bush craft skills demonstration, moth trapping, campfire stories and marshmallow toasting, then rise with the sun to enjoy an early morning exploration. Adults £32, children £18, discount for RSPB members. Book via rspb-bwso-wytham.eventbrite.co.uk

Market stall: Run by the Royal British Legion women's section at Woodstock Social Club, Oxford Street, Woodstock, with homemade cakes, produce, marmalade, tombola and more. 10am. Free entry. 01993 811674.

Art fair: The Fishes pub in North Hinksey village is once again giving over its garden to a fantastic festival of art when it plays host to the fourth edition of the Summer Oxford Art Fair on Saturday and Sunday. More than 40 artists from Oxford, Abingdon, Thame and farther afield will gather for the event. Paintings, sculptures and ceramics, photographs, jewellery and antiques will be among the treasures on show. Free. 07825 443925.

Cholsey Show: Cholsey's big annual event is coming to the Whitehead Meadow, Church Road (next to the primary school). There will be a full afternoon of family entertainment and hundreds of exhibits in the grand marquee. Attractions include Punch and Judy, The Goring Growlers' Dog Agility team, a birds of prey display, Cholsey Silver Band, vintage vehicles, a fire engine, 'bowl for the pork', coconut shy and children's games, tombola, big raffle, charity/trade stalls and plant stall, plus the barbecue, bar, afternoon tea cafe and

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

ice creams. Starts at 12.30pm. If you would like to have a stall, contact Jennie Kent on 01491 652100.

Gardeners' fete: Harwell Gardeners' Club is putting on a garden fete on the lawns of the Rectory in Church Lane, Harwell. Browse the stalls, buy plants for your garden, or have a cup of tea and a cake and relax in a beautiful setting. The tower of St Matthew's Church will be open, so visitors can see the bells and enjoy the view from the top. Harwell Young Singers will perform in the church during the afternoon. Proceeds will go to Didcot Hospital Garden and Harwell Gardeners' Club.. 2-4pm. Free. 01235 821615.

Painting day and sale: Learn to draw like a professional free of charge at this event at the United Reformed Church, 352 Marston Road, Marston, Oxford. There will be a bric-a-brac stall and refreshments including cream teas, with proceeds to Headway Oxfordshire, which supports people with brain injuries. 11am. Free entry.

Table top and jumble sale: Varied stalls and refreshments at this event at Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary, Old Didcot Road, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. 11am. 50p. Pitches are available from £6 (tables supplied), with setting-up for sellers from 10am – call 01491 833938 to book.

Market stall: Sale of books and quality bric-a-brac plus a tombola at Market Place, Abingdon. with all proceeds to the Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary in Stadhampton. 8.30am. Free entry 01235 521208.

Walk to Remember: Take a twilight walk with the charity Marie Curie and raise money to care for people living with a terminal illness. There will be a 10km around Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, starting at 6.30pm, plus live music, entertainment and picnics. Registration is £10 per adult in advance from 0845 052 4184 and £20 on the night, and free for children under 16s. There is a minimum fundraising amount of £100, which pays for five hours of care from Marie Curie.

Heritage skills taster session: Drop in to The Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, and make your own beautiful pewter ornaments over an open fire, as part of its Stepping into Our Natural Heritage project. No need to book. 10am. Free. 01865 409413.

SUNDAY

National Gardens Scheme: Appleton Dene in Yarnells Hill, Botley, Oxford, featured in Garden News magazine, and 86 Hurst Rise, Cumnor Hill, Oxford, will be open. Appleton Dene is a beautiful secluded garden set in a hidden valley bordered by woods and a field. The one-quarter acre garden on steeply sloping surrounds a mature tulip tree. There will be plant sale and homemade teas. Meanwhile, 86 Hurt Rise is a small town garden brimming with herbaceous perennial plants, roses, clematis, shrubs and small trees. 11am-5pm. Combined entrance: adults £4, children free. 07701 000977.

Windmill open: Visit the 18th century

stone tower windmill in Windmill Lane, Wheatley, now restored to working order. There will be stewards on hand to explain how the mill works and also tell you about its history. Weather permitting, the sails will turn several times during opening hours. From the top there are great views over Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Admission is free, but donations to Wheatley Windmill Preservation Society for its upkeep are welcome. 2-6pm. 01865 874610.

MONDAY

Theatre weeks: Five-day workshops in drama (£125) and musical theatre (£140) for youngsters aged eight-12 at Chipping Norton Theatre. 01608 642350.

National Gardens Scheme: Home Farm, Middle Lane, Balcote, near Banbury. Formerly a plant lover's garden, but now redesigned as low maintenance with flowering shrubs, mature trees and poetry. Wheelchair access. Homemade teas. 10am. Donations only please. 01295 738194.

TUESDAY

Junk modelling: Children can take part in this craft activity at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, as part of its Trash Talking exhibition. Drop-in session from 2-4pm for children aged five upwards. Children £2, adults/concessions free. Discounted entry to the galleries. 01993 810213.

Cool Continents: Get creative with art and craft activities every Tuesday in August at the Harcourt Arboretum, Peacock Gate, Nuneham Courtenay, each themed around one of the world's continents. This week's one is South America, making traditional Amazonian headdresses and nature weaving. It is a drop-in session from 1-4pm, free with museum entry. Visitors can find out about trees from all over the world with the arboretum's ongoing Cool Continents trail. Adults £4.50, concessions £3, children free). 01865 341576.

Shadow puppets: Children can take a trip under the sea at Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot, with puppeteer Emma Boor from Wild Boor Ideas and make an octopus, a shark or even a sunken pirate ship, then put on a short performance. 10.30am-12pm. 01235 515144.

Open mic night: Musicians, poets, performance artists and storytellers are invited to perform at the cafe at Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot. 7.30pm. If you are interested in performing, call the box 01235 515144 or email cornerstone@southoxon.gov.uk

Aphasia drop-in session: North Oxford Association Community Centre, Diamond Place, Summertown, for people with this communication disability.. 2.30pm. Free. 01865 604329.

Theatre

TODAY

Twelfth Night: In Oxford Shakespeare Company's production at Wadham

College Gardens, Parks Road, Oxford, Nick Lloyd Webber revisits his acclaimed score under the direction of Nick Green for this adaptation of The Bard's timeless comedy. With gypsy folk band, mad hair, immense jewellery, outrageous costumes. 7.30pm. £13-£23. 01865 305305. Until August 15. Not Sunday or Monday.

As You Like It: Lawn setting for Shakespeare's romantic comedy, at Lady Margaret Hall, Norham Gardens, Oxford. The production by Creation features a wrestling match, love notes on trees and boys falling in love with girls dressed as boys. 7.30pm, plus Saturday matinees at 2.30pm. Tickets are £22 from creationtheatre.co.uk or 01865 766266. Runs until September 12. Not Sundays.

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels: Michael Praed, Noel Sullivan, Carley Stenson and Mark Benton star in this musical comedy version of the hit film starring Michael Caine. The run at the New Theatre, Oxford, lasts until Saturday. 7.30pm, with matinees today and Saturday. See atgtickets.com

Music

TOMORROW

Wilderness festival: Cornbury Park, near Great Tew, until Sunday. The headline acts are Bjork, George Clinton and Ben Howard on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, respectively. There will also be talks and debates, food and drink, theatre and arts, workshops. For tickets, see wildernessfestival.com

A cappella concert: A Cappella Chor Villach, a top group from Austria, will perform a selection of sacred and secular music at Merton College Chapel, Merton Street, Oxford. 7.30pm. Free.

FRIDAY

Club Rio: Marlborough Club, Broadway, Didcot. Music for the over 30s featuring dance music from the 70s to the present day. 9pm-1am. £5 07789 428795.

SATURDAY

Bicester Folk Festival: A fun-packed family event starting with workshops from OYAP and an arts and crafts market from noon, which includes local handmade jewellery and woodwork, retro handbags, face painting, balloons and more. Garth Park, Launton Road, Bicester. In the evening, from 5pm, there will be performances from The Moulettes, Palmerston and Mad Dog Mcreea. Throughout the day there will be refreshments. The event is sponsored by Bicester Village in partnership with Bicester Town Council to raise money for Katherine House Hospice, Adderbury. 12-5pm free and £10 from 5pm-10.30pm. Tickets from Bicester Village visitors centre or bicester.gov.uk/event/bicester-folk-festival

SUNDAY

Pete Fryer Band: This four-piece covers band returns to the Bell Inn, Market Place, Wantage. for another fun Sunday afternoon. 5pm. Free entry. 01235 763718.

Comedy

SATURDAY

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Four stand-up comics from the UK and international comedy circuit.. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 0400.

Grants for good causes are available once again

Applications open this year for up to £10,000 support for registered charities

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

GOOD causes up and down the county are being offered another chance to bid for cash from the *Banbury Cake's* parent company.

Every year, Gannett Media's charitable arm, the Gannett Foundation, gives away a total of about £20,000 to a range of worthy causes in Oxfordshire.

Applications for this year's round are now open and organisations which have registered charity status are invited to step up and pitch for their share of £5,000 to £10,000 worth of grants.

Banbury Cake editor Simon O'Neill said: "We are once again delighted to hear from registered charities with projects that take a creative approach to fundamental issues such as education and neighbourhood improvements, economic development, youth development, local problem solving, assistance to disadvantaged or disabled people, environmental conservation and cultural enrichment.

The grants focus on projects that bring lasting benefits to communities served by our newspapers and websites."

While preference may be given to ideas that create a durable legacy, the foundation will consider single events or projects of limited duration that otherwise meet our criteria.

It will not consider applications for general appeals, salaries or running costs, political and religious organisations, state or privately run schools or hospitals – other than hospices.

Mr O'Neill said: "We will accept applications of any size or ambition, though typically our grants are made for substantial projects which require and merit awards of between £5,000 and £10,000.

"We are able to join with other contributors to support elements of larger projects, though we prefer to be in a position of making a donation which will fund a project entirely or which constitutes the final instalment to complete a project."

Grants from the Gannett Foundation have given a much-needed boost to existing organisations or helped new ones get on their feet.

Mabel Pritchard special school in Blackbird Leys now has a sensory garden, wheelchair swing and integrated roundabout for



Deputy headteacher Kate Schneling and MP Andrew Smith push William Grant on a swing on the revamped playground at Mabel Pritchard School



children to enjoy, and officially launched the new space on Tuesday, June 5, in the company of delighted families, staff and Oxford East MP Andrew Smith.

The school had received a crucial £4,500 from the Gannett Foundation in December. More than £5,000 was also donated to Sobell House Hospice, based in the Churchill Hospital, to buy wheelchairs for

patients needing palliative and end-of-life care.

The deadline for applications is Friday, October 16.

Applications must be made on an official form available from oxfordmail.co.uk/news/community/gannettfoundation

Correspondence will not be entered into. Entry forms must be completed in full and emailed to gannettapplications@nqo.com with supporting documents.

Winners will be notified in December.

The cost of rural crime goes up

RURAL crime cost Oxfordshire £760,000 in the past year – up from £650,000 in 2013.

A survey by insurance company NFU Mutual showed the rise came despite a decrease in rural crime across the country, down to £37.8m in 2014 from £44.5m the previous year.

The figures for 2014 are the most recent available.

Those surveyed said the most common items stolen in the county were tools, garden equipment and machinery.

Respondents across the country also said they were concerned by cybercrime – with 63 per cent of people saying it was a growing problem for rural communities.

Oxfordshire had the 16th highest cost of rural crime in the UK, but was lower than neighbouring Wiltshire, where rural crime cost £840,000.

NFU Mutual assistant agent in Oxfordshire Bethany Filmer said: "It is disappointing to see levels of rural crime rising in Oxfordshire, especially when there has been a decline nationally.

"Initiatives aimed at reducing livestock theft and installing tracking on agricultural vehicles are having a real impact across the country, and making life increasingly difficult for rural criminals.

"But the figures for Oxfordshire underscore the message that criminals will move to take advantage of weaknesses, and rural communities should remain vigilant and put security at the forefront of their minds."

It comes despite Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner Anthony Stansfeld pledging to make tackling rural crime top of his priorities when he was elected in 2013. He stated police would attend every rural crime reported in the Thames Valley Police area, including Oxfordshire.

BanburyCake

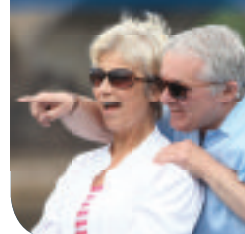
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Dark thriller sure to send a tingle down your spine

THE GIFT (15, 108 mins) Thriller/Romance. Jason Bateman, Rebecca Hall, Joel Edgerton, Allison Tolman, Busy Phillips. Director: Joel Edgerton

If every cloud has a silver lining then the dark, stormy skies which rage over actor Joel Edgerton's disturbing directorial debut should yield a small fortune in precious metal.

On the surface, *The Gift* harks back to 1990s psychological thrillers such as *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle*, which planted a murderous cuckoo in the nest of a picture-perfect American family.

Here, it's a socially awkward former classmate who worms his ways into the lives of an upwardly mobile couple and unsettles the lovebirds with impromptu acts of kindness.

Once the cogs of Edgerton's genre-bound narrative click into place, we discover the conventional moral boundaries between interloper and victims have been deliciously blurred.

Our sympathies see-saw between the quietly menacing antagonist and his targets, jolting violently in one direction in the closing minutes with a surprising final flourish that sends a trickle of cold sweat down the spine.

On more than one occasion, Edgerton tees up an act of blood-thirsty retribution that would have been par for the course in the 1990s and then defies our expectations at the last second.

The threat of violence hangs in the air but rarely manifests on screen.

Simon Callem (Jason Bateman) and his emotionally brittle wife Robyn (Rebecca Hall) move back to his hometown of Los Angeles, where he is eyeing a major promotion at a computer security firm.

During a shopping trip for furnishings, the Callems cross paths with Simon's old school chum Gordon Mosley (Edgerton), who still lives in the area.

"That was awkward," jokes Robyn as they leave the store.

The following day, the Callems find a bottle of wine from Gordon on their doorstep, and Simon reveals the loner's nickname at school was Gordo the weirdo.

"Kids are mean," laments Robyn.

"Kids are honest," coldly retorts Simon.

In the days that follow, Gordon arrives unannounced at the house while Simon is at work and forges an uneasy bond with Robyn, who grows concerned about an unspoken incident involving the two men when they both attended high school.

"The bad things, they can be a gift. That's how I like to see things," professes Gordon.

Robyn enlists the help of friendly neighbour Lucy (Allison Tolman) to uncover the truth.

The Gift has fun toying with conventions of the genre, without straying too far from creepily familiar territory.

Edgerton sustains dramatic



From left, Rebecca Hall, Jason Bateman and Joel Edgerton star in *The Gift*

momentum as his script uncoils, eliciting strong performances from Hall and Bateman, the latter playing effectively against type as his character chokes on an ice cold dish of revenge.

The writer-director inhabits the film's plum role with cool detachment, lacing throwaway lines with a hint of malevolence to suggest that something wicked lurks behind his seemingly benign facade.

When the mask finally drops, we're unnerved to glimpse what lies beneath.

Cake Bookworm

Early One Morning by Virginia Bailey, hardback by Virago, £12.99 (ebook £8.99)

Second-time novelist and acclaimed short-story writer Virginia Bailey pulls off a triumph with *Early One Morning* – an exquisitely rendered novel that explores how one powerful and unexpected love can shape a life forever.

The novel opens in Rome, 1943. In the Jewish ghetto, men, women and children are being rounded up by Nazi officers to be shipped off to concentration camps. A passer-by – a young Italian woman, Chiara Ravello, locks eyes with a Jewish mother. Knowing instinctively what she is being asked to do, Chiara claims the woman's son Daniele as her own, saving him from a certain death. It is a moment that changes her forever as her life becomes inextricably bound to that of the traumatised little boy.

Thirty years later, we meet Chiara in her sixties; living alone in Rome, she is still trying to move on after the loss of Daniele, who vanished without trace in his twenties. Out of the blue, she receives a call from Cardiff: it is a 16-year-old girl, claim-

ing to be Daniele's daughter.

A complex and multi-layered narrative, the novel slips expertly back and forth between two different time periods, following a handful of characters across numerous locations. The settings are beautifully evoked, creating striking contrasts between the tensions and desperation of war-time and the freedom and stability of the 1970s. The characters themselves are a gratifyingly unusual collection – among them a grieving spinster, a damaged little boy, a petulant teenager and a guilt-ridden priest – and each one is imbued with a compelling aliveness that draws us into their orbit. By turns witty, poignant, tragic and uplifting, this feast of a novel will mark out its author as a powerful voice on the literary scene.

You Don't Have To Live Like This by Benjamin Markovits, paperback by Faber & Faber, £14.99 (ebook £6.99)

Greg 'Marny' Marnier, a rudderless Yale graduate in his thirties, is invited by a varsity classmate, the millionaire Robert James, to join a new initiative. Robert is buying

up a sizeable tranche of (currently) cheap housing in a much-depleted zone of Detroit – focal point of America's social dysfunctions. His vision? To create "the kind of small-town community we still associate with the founding of this country". So Marny and a group of similarly drifting well-to-do WASP friends move in, but this is no idyllic Pilgrim settlement, and soon enough the troubles and tensions begin. The plan – is it a form of trickle-down philanthropy, or a get-rich-quick gentrification scheme? Can you really build a community overnight? And what are Detroit's existing citizens – mostly black, mostly poor – to make of their new neighbours? Are these people really doing their bit to make the world a better place – or are they just crassly condescending colonialists?

Markovits' sixth novel unpicks with surgical precision the racial tensions of an advanced economy where entrepreneurial opportunity goes hand in hand with massive inequality. Brilliantly plotted, wonderfully nuanced and masterfully controlled, this has the instant feel of an important book.

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with Claire Petulengro

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ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

You struggle this week, but the good news is that Friday's new Moon is your saving grace where you finally get to see who is and isn't on your side. You're about to discover you have friends in very high places. Emotional blackmail a close one places on you is not ok. Acknowledge this please my friend. Ring now to hear why fellow Aries are worth spending more time with.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

This is a really important and memorable week for you as you open your eyes to a situation which has been dragging you down for a really long time now. Don't be afraid to stand up for what you do and do not want. Close ones will respect you far more for it in the long run. Holiday plans arise and prove more exciting than you'd dreamed. Ring now so I can tell you about your future.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

Someone really seems to have touched your heart, but you don't seem to know how to handle your emotions. Just go with it. I know you've been hurt in the past, but I also know things are different now and so will you once you've seen what this weekend's events have to offer you. A change of heart from a family member makes it easier to get on with people in your inner circle. Call for insight.

0906 585 4362

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 22

Something that someone has said has shaken you and you're not quite sure what your next move should be. None is the answer Cancer. Leave it to others to make the next move, so that you can be sure of what they are willing to offer. The Moon helps you sort out financial matters to your benefit on Tuesday and Wednesday if you face them. Ring now for a new view on love.

0906 585 4363

LEO

Jul 23-Aug 22

You thought you could trust those you work with, but they seem to have let you down or even lied to you. Back off and give yourself time to calm down as it seems there is more to this mystery than first meets the eye. Tips you learn in the name of your career can change your financial status for the better and improve your reputation. Ring now so we can be more honest about relationships.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

You're becoming more fussy about what you want from those around you, but careful you're not casting yourself in a difficult light. Listen when others talk, then cast your opinion to be sure you are being judged in a fair fashion. Perfect partner looks promising for your future. For once, you can afford to wear your heart on your sleeve. Ring now to hear how your new world would be.

0906 585 4365

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

Your tastes in life are changing so what would have worked for you before may not be what works for you now. Your ruling planet Venus helps you to make new friends and maybe even new lovers, should you desire. Be fair to younger people who have taken a big step in being honest with you these past two weeks. Ring now to grasp the energy Mars can offer to life this week.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

You must believe nothing of what you hear and only half of what you see. It's the key to you keeping out of trouble in the next seven days. You get help from high places for free in your career and you should find by the end of this month you can afford to ask for more from those you work with. Ring now to hear why it's not worth flirting with those coming back from your past.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

You've been worrying about those who would not do the same for you and it's time to sit down and work out who is beneficial in your life and who is just being a drain. It will take the strength of Mars to push you to distance yourself from those you used to depend on, but I know you can do it Sagittarius. Ring now to hear how friends could become lovers for some of you archers this week.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN

Dec 22-Jan 19

Arguments with family and friends could well get out of hand this week and you would be wise to back down with those you don't want to see feed into your mind and then shouting yourself in the foot, so to speak. If you know you owe an apology then make it before Tuesday or you may lose the chance to make it altogether. Ring now for some honest talking.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

You're having mixed feelings about someone who, not so long ago, you really thought you were falling for. As is typical of your sign you are putting up those defences but it's only leaving you feeling deflated. You are the one who is driving this very emotional train, so try to keep control and admit what makes you happy. Life is for living. Ring now so I can give you courage.

0906 585 4370

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

Money matters are not as bad as some of you may think and the sooner you may not get on with friends as you usually do, which could lead you to think that you have outgrown them or even vice versa. Be the first to offer to talk things through so that you can show you are the bigger person. It can make all the difference as to how you feel and how things turn out. Ring now to hear how Uranus brings you messages via your subconscious Wednesday.

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Cash for hybrid

■ Volvo's first petrol plug-in hybrid, the XC90 T8 Twin Engine, has qualified for the UK Plug-in Car Grant (PICG) scheme from the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV).

The Swedish firm's new XC90 T8 Twin Engine is now available with an on-road price of £54,955 (including PICG).

The XC90 is the first car to be powered by Volvo's new Drive-E powertrains. With a combined output of 407hp, this seven-seat SUV emits just 49g/km of CO₂, at the same time being able to go from zero to 60mph in 5.3 seconds.

■ The largest ever caravan model made from Lego bricks will be unveiled at the National Motorhome and Caravan Show in October. It will be made up from more than 150,000 individual LEGO pieces.

The LEGO caravan will have a fully fitted interior, with working lights, sink, bed and seating that visitors will be able to try out for themselves.

It will take a team of eight professional LEGO builders more than 1,000 hours to create the caravan. The shape is based on the "teardrop" design of the T@B 320RS caravan.

Celerio tackles streets with ease

Auto Facts

Model: Suzuki Celerio SZ4
Price: £8,999
Insurance group: Seven
Fuel consumption (Combined): 78.4mpg
Top speed: 96mph
Length: 360cm/141.7in
Width: 160cm/63in
Luggage capacity: 8.9 cu ft
Fuel tank capacity: 7.7 gallons/35 litres
CO₂ emissions: 84g/km
Warranty: Three years/62,137 miles

David Duffy
david.duffy@nqo.com

FEW car makers have more expertise in making big bucks from small cars than Suzuki.

The five-seater Celerio was unveiled as the car maker's "global compact city car", a tag that sometimes causes your heart to sink, as what might suit Asian markets often does not cut the mustard when it comes to more demanding European, and particularly UK, tastes.

Primarily a city runabout, it handles longer runs with surprising ease, though noise levels creep up at motorway cruising speeds.

Available in three trim grades and priced from £6,999, it packs in a surprising amount of interior space. Black is the predominant interior colour, while the main seat fabric is a blue dot pattern in keeping with the exterior colour, together with contrasting black trim for the sides of the seats.

The launch of the car received spectacular publicity, unfortunately for the wrong reasons, when it was recalled the day after it went on sale after Autocar magazine testers experienced brake failure twice during high-



Suzuki Celerio SZ4

speed emergency braking. It emerged that under extreme cases of heavy braking from high speed, the car's safety mechanism "detected a crash too early", causing the brake pedal to retract. A few dozen recalled cars were fitted with a new brake pedal assembly and Suzuki says that they do not expect the recall to have lasting problems for the car, which the firm hopes to sell in its thousands in the UK.

The car was launched with the 1.0-litre engine used in the outgoing Alto and Splash models that it replaces, but when fitted with the new 1.0-litre, three-cyl-

inder Dualjet engine, with CO₂ emissions of just 84g/km and combined fuel consumption of 78.4mpg, Suzuki says the Celerio will be the cleanest car on sale at under £10,000.

Suzuki also offers an automatic gearbox and says the system comes without any loss in fuel efficiency or increase in CO₂ emissions against manual transmission.

Its green credentials have not been at the expense of equipment and all models sold in the UK come with air conditioning, DAB radio, Bluetooth and alloy wheels.

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2007 57	FORD MONDEO 2.0 TDCi. Zetec.	Silver. 5 Door hatchback. Previously supplied by ourselves. Superb car. Full service history. Aircon. Remote central locking. Alloys. Radio/CD. Electric windows and door mirrors. PAS. on board computer. Airbags. Etc. Sold with a new MOT and a full service. HPI clear. Higher than average mileage hence price.....	£2,295
2003 53	RENAULT KANGOO 1.2 Authentique	WHEEL CHAIR CONVERSION. Silver. Local vehicle. Approximately only 65000 recorded miles. Very good condition throughout. PAS. Electric windows. Central locking. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt. HPI Clear.....	£2,295
2004 04	PEUGEOT 206SE 1.4cc.	Silver. 5 door hatchback. Local car. Full service history, approximately 72000 recorded miles. Aircon. Electric windows. Remote central locking. Radio/CD. Very nice condition throughout. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt kit. HPI Clear.....	£1,995
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In The Summertime

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THE summer is the perfect time for getting out and about to festivals, shows and gatherings. Whether you're into mud and music, country farm shows or craft fairs, there's a festival to suit everyone. Usually you'll be getting there by car, so it pays to make sure your car is in fine festival fettle.

It's always best to start with the basics, so make sure you have checked tyre pressures, inspected the tyres for plenty of tread, topped up the screenwash and given the car a good clean. If the car is due a service or MoT in the near future, it's best to get it out of the way sooner to guard against a breakdown that could cast a

shadow over the summer fun.

It's also worth checking the air conditioning is fully functional if it's fitted to your car. Stuck in a traffic jam on a hot day, it can be the difference between a chilled weekend away and a hot, sticky endurance test.

With the car sorted, it's time to pack. If you're staying away for a few days, it means slotting everything into the boot carefully to avoid overloading the car. With extra weight in the boot, you might need to adjust the headlights to avoid dazzling oncoming vehicles. Remember to pack the first things you will need last, so they come easily to hand

and ensure waterproofs can be grabbed quickly as you cannot always rely on a British summer.

When you are ready for the off, give yourself plenty of time to get there. Popular festivals attract lots of traffic. Pack plenty of water and snacks to keep yourself hydrated and alert. A cool box that runs off the car's 12-volt socket is perfect for chilling drinks.

Wherever you park at the festival, in a car park or campsite, try to park with the front pointing downhill. Should it rain and turn into a quagmire, you will be able to driver forward safely and should be able to maintain momentum to get you out of the exit.

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